

NRCS WASHINGTON STRATEGIC PLAN

In the fall of 2012, the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington embarked on an adventure through a strategic thinking process. Like most journeys, there have been unexpected diversions and exciting new territory explored.

The journey began in September 2012 when the State Leadership Team (SLT) was led through a facilitated strategic thinking session. Through this effort, the SLT created goals, objectives and milestones for three strategic areas that align with the national NRCS strategic plan: (1) Getting conservation on the ground, (2) Increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and (3) Create a climate where private lands conservation will thrive.

In November 2012, State Conservationist, Roylene Rides at the Door, introduced the SLT to the Organizational Universe (OU) and they realized that NRCS-WA was lacking the core of our existence: our values. Information was gathered at 12 "roundtable" sessions across the state with Washington NRCS employees. They shared what they believed the definition of our values should be. The sessions were held from February to March 2013.

Through the input of every employee in the state, NRCS has adopted the following four values:

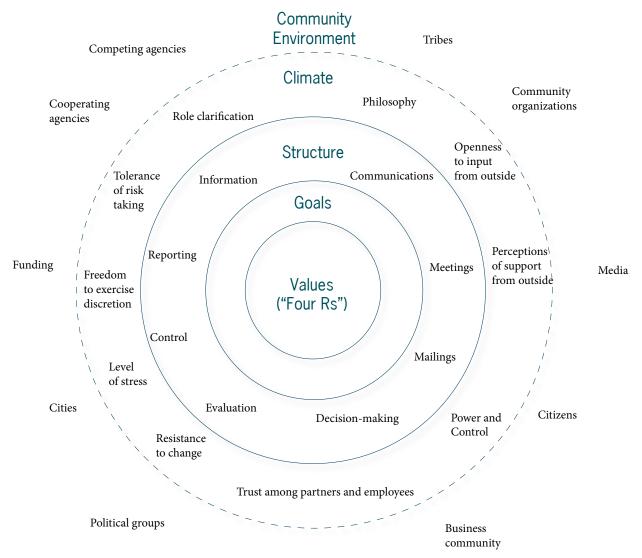
- 1. Relevance
- 2. Responsibility
- 3. Respect
- 4. Relax

During the sessions, Rides at the Door also asked the employees what she could do to help them in their jobs. The result was the core of the "Climate" section in the strategic planning document.



NRCS WASHINGTON ORGANIZATIONAL UNIVERSE

The Organizational Universe is designed to enable the department to view the entire organization and perceive its web of relationships both within and outside of the agency.



ORGANIZATIONAL UNIVERSE

Organizational Values. At the core of the organization is a set of values--an underlying philosophy-which defines the organization's reason for existence.

Organizational Goals. Organizational goals result from the articulation of the department's values.

Structure. Structure involves much more than the organizational chart. The chart depicts the formal mechanisms and relationships that enable implementation of these values and goals.

Climate. Climate is the interface between NRCS and our internal and external relations. (The climate of the organization depicts the atmosphere that results from implementation of the structure.)

Community Environment. The outside environment describes influences that may affect the organization's ability to accomplish its goals.

OUR VALUES - THE "FOUR Rs"

These values are the center or the heart of who we are and what we do. Everything NRCS-WA does must revolve around these values.

Relevance: We will deliver excellent service to customers by empowering employees to be technical leaders in the conservation of natural resources.

Responsibility: We will hold ourselves and our agency responsible to preserve resources unselfishly and equally for past, present and future generations by providing quality technical assistance in the most efficient way possible.

Respect: We will set an example of respect by keeping an open mind, listening before talking, and acting in an honorable way both personally and professionally. We will show our customers, partners and coworkers respect by putting forth our best efforts to provide quality and timely service and ask the same of our agency; that our agency provide us with the tools and guidance needed for us to effectively carry out the task. We shall bring only constructive criticism; but with solutions.

Relax: Allow the workplace to be an atmosphere that promotes personal responsibility to renew ourselves physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, and that allows us to provide a high quality product for our customers and a place of confidence in our coworkers that results in long-term, positive effects so that we can relax. A workplace leadership that promotes and employees that are permitted to celebrate successes, renew selves and back away from focused effects of work duties. A leadership to provide the tools, support and stability.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIMARY GOALS

Organizational Goals

Goals describe what concrete outcomes we are striving for, and how it will attain our values.



The Strategic Plan focuses on three primary goals which have been incorporated into the State Business Plan:

- Get more conservation on the ground
- Increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency
- Create a climate where private lands conservation will thrive.

Actions tied to the goals will help us meet the objectives of the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Get More Conservation on the Ground

Targeted, streamlined and effective implementation of programs that meet Key Performance Measurements (KPMs).

- 1. Implementation of conservation by targeting the top three State Resource Assessment/Tribal Resource Assessment resource priorities in each team
- 2. Develop an eligible practice list for each priority resource concern
- 3. Secure contribution and other informal agreements to ensure a minimum of 10 percent financial assistance/technical assistance from outside sources
- 4. Develop monitoring and tracking strategies
- 5. Streamline ranking criteria /screening for funding pools
- 6. Achieve resource management system level conservation planning
- 7. Develop planning and program strategies for program implementation
- 8. Build technical capacity

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Increase Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency

Right people in the right place supported by the right tools

- 1. Hold more effective meetings
- 2. Identify roles and responsibilities of the State Leadership Team (SLT)
- 3. Update and maintain Job Approval Authority policy and implementation
- 4. State and Area Specialists provide support and direct assistance throughout the year
- 5. Identify and establish interdisciplinary teams and determine priorities
- 6. Develop Corrective Action Plans (CAPs)
- 7. Develop training plans
- 8. Implement the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative (CDSI) and mobile planning
- 9. Use the NRCS-WA web site and SharePoint sites consistently
- 10. Maintain the Quality Assurance Program (QAR)

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Create a climate where private lands conservation will thrive.

Improve employee morale, public recognition, and decision-making processes. Build strong partnerships and improve internal and external customer service.

- 1. Improve communications in order to address employee morale
- 2. Encourage the use of team building socializing activities to promote camaraderie
- 3. Reduce employee stress and promote employee morale, health and wellness
- 4. Establish, communicate and implement the NRCS-WA strategic plan
- 5. Establish a consistent process for State Conservationist communications to staff
- 6. State Leadership Team (SLT) will provide guidance and policy through bulletins in a timely and consistent manner
- 7. Refine process to inform the public about our technical expertise
- 8. Obtain and use pertinent information from State Technical Advisory Comittee (STAC), Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC), and Local Working Groups (LWGs)
- 9. Increase relevant and active participation
- 10. Develop and provide awareness to staff on internal customer service processes and protocols
- 11. Establish consistent use of products and services provided and useful for field/customers' needs through a committee in FY14
- 12. Evaluate quality of service being provided to our customers
- 13. Make NRCS services easier to access
- 14. Communicate benefits of our services to our customers

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

Partnerships

NRCS Washington relies heavily on partners who can share in benefits and risks, and who can provide resources that help achieve our aligned vision, goals, and desired conservation outcomes.

- 1. Identify needs: workload, staff, communication, etc.
- 2. Assess gaps in funding, staff, technical capacity, information transfer and other resources
- 3. Identify partners to fill gaps
- 4. Strengthen desired partnerships and develop new partnerships where needed
- 5. Minimize expenditure of resources on entities who don't help us fulfill a specific need



— Hugh Hammond Bennett, First NRCS Chief



United States Department of AgricultureNatural Resources Conservation Service

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www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov

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